

# Partnership on Health And Safety in Scotland

## Local Authorities and the Health and Safety Executive working together (agenda item 3.1)

### Issue

1 To inform PHASS of the joint work the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Local Authorities (LA), in their role as enforcing authorities for the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, have been undertaking in Scotland. A diagram showing LA/HSE relations is attached at Annex 1.

### Background

2 The HSE and LAs have a common interest in reducing workplace injury and ill health in Scotland, this work has been taken forward as part of the GB wide *Local Authorities & HSE working together strategic programme*, known more easily as LASP.

3 The programme has initially been concerned with developing ways that HSE and LAs could best use their joint resources as enforcing authorities to work together and contribute to the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) revitalising targets.

4 The current phase of the programme is to demonstrate to the Commission that HSE and LAs are actually working together in a partnership. This is nothing new to HSE and LAs in Scotland, simply a continuation of the work which has been taking place for many years.

5 Examples of joint working

- I. HSE has been running a pilot project examining the system whereby HSE inspectors and Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) are authorised to undertake their duties. Inspectors and EHOs require to be authorised to enable them to undertake their full range of duties, currently each LA and the HSE are only able to authorise their staff to undertake their duties at the premises they enforce as specified in the Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) regulations 1998. For the LAs the authorisation is further restricted by being only valid at premises within the geographical boundary of the authority. In Scotland our contribution to the pilot has been in two areas:
  - a. In the Western Isles selected EHOs have in addition to been authorised by their own council <sup>(1)</sup> been authorised by HSE. This has the effect of enabling EHOs to deal with issues of concern they might come across in their day to day work and would previously have had to refer back to HSE as the enforcing authority. The EHOs involved in the pilot have been undertaking joint visits with HSE inspectors to construction, transport and warehousing activities on the islands and mainland to ensure consistency of approach and a network of contacts within the LA and HSE has been established to provide them with ongoing support.
  - b. HSE Inspectors in Edinburgh and EHOs from councils who form the Central Fife and Tayside Liaison Group <sup>(2)</sup> have been undertaking inspections at care homes within the area of Scotland that the group

covers. As part of this work the opportunity has been taken to see how EHOs being warranted by both their own council and HSE would work in this sector where enforcement responsibility is split between HSE and LAs, though the types of premises and work activities are very similar. Previous work had been undertaken by the EHOs in residential care homes and they were keen to extend this to nursing homes. This has resulted in EHOs inspecting what had previously been considered premises that HSE inspectors would inspect. In the past other methods have been used to transfer premises between enforcing authorities, most recently with 'high street' dry cleaners, this work is providing an opportunity to compare the two approaches. The HSE inspectors and EHOs involved in the work have received training, been involved in joint visits and established a network of contacts amongst themselves to provide support for the duration of the work. The care home providers were made aware of the work at a health and safety awareness day held prior to the work commencing.

The results of these two areas of work will be fed into the pilot that is to be evaluated later in 06/07.

- II. HSE inspectors from Aberdeen and EHOs from councils in the North of Scotland Liaison Group <sup>(3)</sup> have been working together on issues particularly concerned with warehousing and distribution. It is anticipated that their experience will provide an input to guidance for this sector that is currently being revised.
- III. Safe Highlander, an initiative to promote and develop a range of community safety themes with young people was once again rolled out earlier this year to the current Primary Sevens in Highland region. This not only involved HSE and Highland Council working together but also with others such as Highland Constabulary, Highland and Islands Fire Brigade, Highland Drug and Alcohol team, British transport Police and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.
- IV. HSE in conjunction with 5 councils in the East of Scotland <sup>(4)</sup> organised two awareness days for people who work outdoors principally in the leisure sector such as grounds men and green keepers but also landscape gardeners and similar occupations. Both events proved a success though one was flooded out necessitating an early curtailment; it is planned to repeat that event in Autumn 2006.
- V. 13 councils who form the West of Scotland Liaison Group <sup>(5)</sup> have been involved with the Backs 2005 campaign in conjunction with inspectors from the HSE. A similar campaign is running in October 2006 and participation from councils is again expected to be high.
- VI. EHOs from a number of councils <sup>(6)</sup> and HSE Occupational Health Inspectors have been involved with inspecting the home shopping delivery activities of some of the large supermarkets. Issues have been identified with MSD, workplace transport, slips and trips amongst others and the EHOs and inspectors are working with the companies to formulate action plans to address these.

Further information can be obtained from Peter Dodd, Partnership Manager (Scotland), HSE, Edinburgh, Tel. 0131 247 2132.

**Action:**

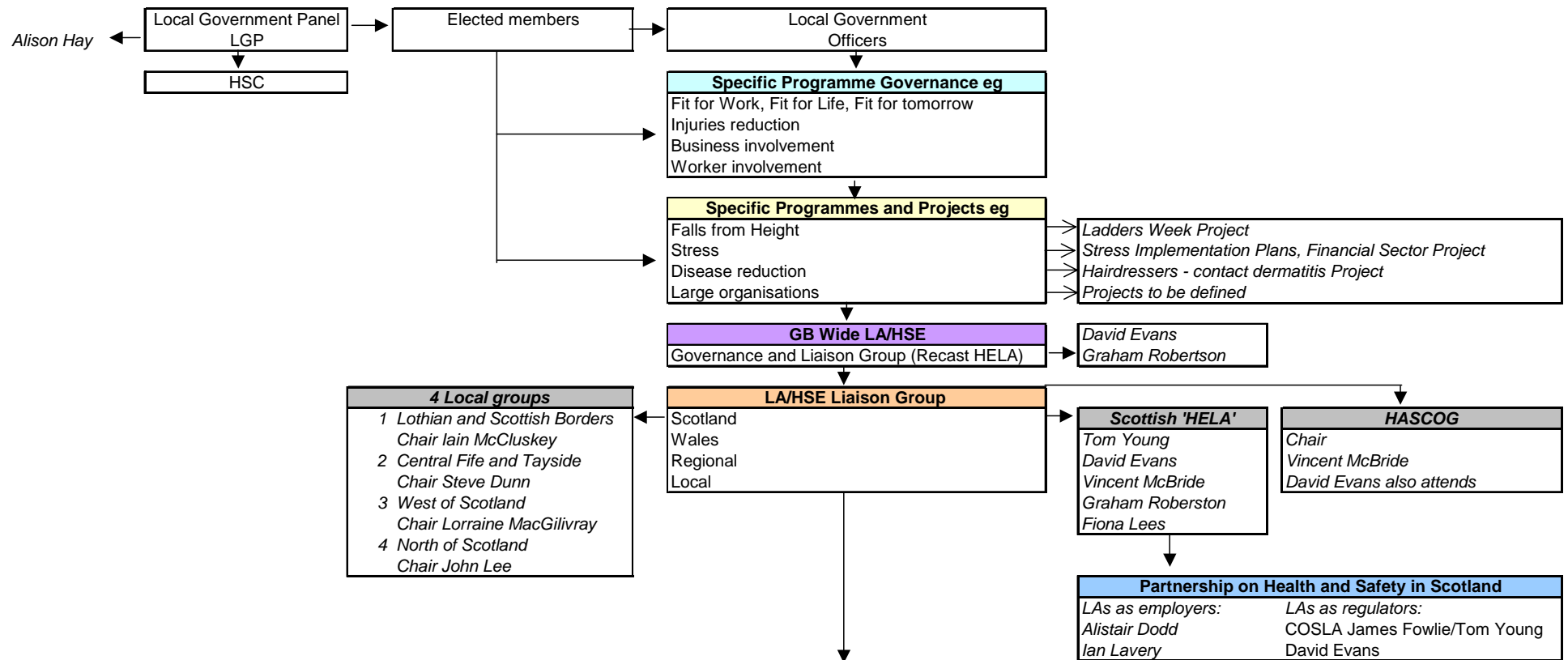
- 6 The committee is invited to note these developments.

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**Notes**

- (1) Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
- (2) Angus Council, Clackmannanshire Council, Dundee City Council, Falkirk Council, Fife Council, Perth & Kinross Council, Stirling Council.
- (3) Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highland Council, Moray Council, Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council.
- (4) City of Edinburgh Council, East Lothian Council, Midlothian Council, Scottish Borders Council, West Lothian Council.
- (5) Argyll & Bute Council, Dumfries & Galloway Council, East Ayrshire Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, East Renfrewshire Council, Glasgow City Council, Inverclyde Council, North Ayrshire Council, North Lanarkshire Council, Renfrewshire Council, South Ayrshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council, West Dunbartonshire Council
- (6) City of Edinburgh Council, Dundee City Council, Glasgow City Council

# Annex 1



Improved Health and Safety outcomes in the workplace